Exiles Demand U.S. Permission to Attack Cuba

Post 12/20/71

MIAMI, Dec. 19 (UPI)—Some Cuban exiles, enraged by the seizure of the freighter Johnny Express, are demanding U.S. permission to wage war on Cuba.

Hundreds of exiles marched through Miami's "Little Havana" section Saturday night, chanting "Guerra, Guerra, Guerra" (war, war, war).

The Rev. Tomas Cruz, a Bay of Pigs veteran and an activist in the Cuban exile colony here, spoke to the crowd, demanding that the U.S. government let Cuban exiles fight to overthrow Castro. Boisterous demonstrators blew car horns and sang the Cuban national anthem after Cruz spoke.

Jose Villa Jr., son of the Johnny Express captain, who is being held in Cuba with his crew and ship, was among the 2,000 marchers.

The Cuban government is holding 28 crewmen from the Johnny Express and the Layla Express, which was captured Dec. 5. Both ships are owned by the Babun brothers, anti-Castro Cuban exiles living in Miami.

Both ships are of Panamanian registry. Capt. Villa is the only American citizen among the crewmen. The U.S. government has formally asked for Villa's release, but the Cubans have refused, charging that the ships were engaged in spying activities for the CIA.

The Department of Defense ordered naval and air forces in the Caribbean area on alert, and in response Cuba said it put its own armed forces on alert.